

Every Story (Comes To An End)

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Every Story (Comes To An End)

by [SilentTeyz](#)

Summary

Three alternative endings to [Every Flight \(Begins With A Fall\)/Crowfic](#): the one where the respawn glitch was really an accident, the one where Tommy didn't want to be an avian, and the one where he meets a completely different family.

Notes

Wohoo! The alt endings are finally coming along! I'm sure that nobody's interested in listening to my excuses so just proceed with reading (if you are sensitive to angst, be sure to check out the tags first!).

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

It feels wrong to sit alone on the bench meant for two.

Every time Tubbo closes his eyes, he finds himself waiting; for the wheezing laughter to spill, for the hurricane of swears and play-threats. He waits for Tommy's restless energy to burst, comparable in intensity only with Tubbo's own.

Well. Not as of lately.

Twisting his tongue into words feels like an impossible chore now, meaningless and empty, and he only eats and drinks when Ranboo reminds him to; otherwise, he might've already passed out of hunger. The first few weeks Tubbo refused to sleep at all, obsessed with the idea of finding the person who was responsible for the explosions at the prison – the ones that got Tommy locked up, the ones that got Tommy-

The ones that lead to-

The one that caused the *accident* .

Chasing the answers that were not meant to be ever found – that was what Tubbo did. When his hatred for the faceless enemy had turned to ash, losing to the sticky dark clutches of desperation, the rage shifted towards someone who was actually to blame.

Sam probably regretted letting him into the prison. Tubbo did not. Dragged off from where he was standing in the middle of the cell, shaken by his shoulders and saliva flying into his face, the only thing he could think of was how satisfying it was to hear Dream's neck snap.

It was possibly the last vivid emotion that Tubbo ever felt. He's scaring Michael with his empty stares, with how he sits for hours, motionless, knees tucked under his chin. He knows that and it pangs with guilt, deep down – close enough to recognize it, but not close enough to bring himself to care. While the hugs and the words of concern from Ranboo are still warm and caring, Tubbo bears them like a punishment, for that every time they make him remember that he should've been there to do the same for Tommy.

It's been over a month since Tommy's death, but he still visits his house every day, walks across the Prime path and settles on the bench in mortal silence. It's just him, the soft whispers of leaves on the tree, and the old empty jukebox, worn and scratched under his hand. Tubbo blinks, and he's not alone anymore; Puffy is standing behind the bench, her hand hovering over the backrest, but not quite touching it – good. He'd break her arm if she did.

Maybe Puffy just came. Maybe they've been talking for hours already, Tubbo doesn't know. But when she asks, "What are you waiting for?", he parts his lips and tells her that he wants to be the first person to greet Tommy when he returns.

Puffy's face is concerned, but then again – everybody nowadays looks at him with the same grieving, grim expressions. The only exception had been Jack, up until that one time when Tubbo absently told him that he'd easily jump off the highest building on the server if it

meant bringing Tommy back; Jack seemed horrified, and from then on, walked on eggshells around him.

They talk some more after that. Or, to be more precise, Puffy talks, and Tubbo floats away, only two out of ten words vaguely registering in his mind. He only tunes back in when she starts talking about grief and denial. He straightens and winces – how long did he have to sit without a movement for his muscles to go so sore? – and throws Puffy a look that makes her stumble.

“It’s not denial,” Tubbo says. His own voice never sounded so harsh and cold. “It’s hope.”

Tubbo thinks it’s hope that turns his attention to the compass in Michael’s hands the next day. The boy rummages through the chests and chirps happily when he finds a string, strong and long enough to attach the compass to and wear on his neck. It used to point at Ranboo – in case Michael ever gets lost without either of his parents nearby – but now both of them are here, and the needle spins until its tip turns towards the sea.

Compasses can’t point at mobs, and Michael wasn’t ever taken to that side of the server, so he couldn’t just lock it on a random lodestone. Someone had been here without any of the residents noticing it. While Ranboo paces around the room, his tail kicking dust into the air as it brushes the floor, Tubbo’s sole attention is on the needle that wavers at miniscule angles, loyally showing the direction of an unknown player.

It’s not just a tiny clue – it’s not a clue at *all* , but Tubbo feels more alive than he had in weeks. Perhaps that’s why, even after initial protests, Ranboo lets him go, but not before he forces his arms into sleeves of a coat and wraps a purple scarf around his neck. Tubbo’s grateful for that; not because he cared about the cold, but because it’d be harder to row with his hands frozen.

Abandoning his boat at the shores swallowed by ice, Tubbo already recognizes where he is. There is a distinct thought – to return, to grab a proper weapon and a shield, it wouldn’t be that long if he takes the portal route – but then the compass needle makes a sharp turn and Tubbo’s running through the tundra.

Thump-thud, thump-thud , it’s both the crunch of the snow under his boots and his heartbeat drilling his ears. Tubbo sprints through the sparse forest and doesn’t notice when a branch slaps his face, leaving a long slash between his forehead and ear. By the time he makes it to Techno’s cabin, it’s bleeding, and the blood’s getting into his right eye. He merely blinks it away, wipes at the stinging cut with one hand – the other, in a mitten, clutching the compass – and frantically looks up at where the freezing needle points.

Tommy’s nowhere to be seen.

Instead, it’s Phil, entering a small greenhouse with a scythe. He grabs a handful of wheat, cuts at the base and tosses it into a pre-prepared bag. There are several crows both inside and outside the greenhouse – snatching the stray seeds, or puffing up their feathers to stay warm; one he even can see sitting on Phil’s head and picking at his hair as if in boredom.

That one crow seems to notice him. It caws, the sound muffled by the glass and distance between them, and Phil looks up to frozen Tubbo. If Techno was here, the scythe might've been traded for a sword immediately, but he and Phil long since established that they don't hold strong grudges against each other; no need to play hatred when it's just the two of them. Tubbo trusted Phil enough to bring him to Michael, after all.

It's easy to accidentally brush a finger on the compass when it's constantly in Michael's pocket or hands. It's easy to miss that the needle's pointing the wrong direction if the only thing you did for the past weeks is wait for something that's not going to happen and beat yourself for actions that can't be reversed anymore.

Tubbo feels stupid. He wants to destroy the compass, to stomp on it until the glass breaks and crunches, just like it did with his hope. He raises his hand, aiming at a tree – but his muscles waver at the last moment and it falls into the snow instead.

Michael likes the compass. He wouldn't release it from his hands even as Tubbo was practically about to tear it away. Ranboo promised Michael he'd get the compass back soon – covered for him, supported another of his delirious ideas in hopes it'd make him feel better.

Tubbo tried everything at this point. Every single string he could grab onto had snapped already, and the only thing left is to let the ravine swallow him whole. He wants to be alone in this fall. He doesn't want Ranboo and Michael to get dragged along with him – so maybe it's time he accepts the truth.

Tommy's dead.

Tommy was killed and nothing in this world can bring him back.

His knees give up on. Tears, spilling from his eyes and mixing with blood, stain the compass' face. Tubbo is full-body shaking, now, but no sound leaves his mouth, his throat tightening and trapping the sobs until he starts to suffocate.

He is distinctly aware of the hands gripping his arms, of the face blurred through his tears. "Tubbo- Tubbo, can you hear me?" the person says, and even if his voice clearly wavers with panic, it's still something real, something to hold on to – and Tubbo nods, wiping at his face. More tears run down his cheeks, but it's enough for him to recognize Phil's face, skewed with worry and concern. Tubbo looks past him and at the crow that dropped from the avian's head to his shoulder.

There is one crow that shows up in Snowchester every once in a while. He'd seen it up close a few weeks ago; the bird had frozen, staring at him with its bright eyes. There is this one weird feeling you get when you see a familiar face in the crowd. It might be an old acquaintance, a childhood friend you long since had stopped talking to, or a stranger you once sat on a bench together in a park – up until you look closer and realize that you'd mistaken them for someone else.

That's what he had seen in the crow back then. Flash of recognition, doubtful squirm – and then its gaze defocused, the all-too human look in its eyes dissolving into something simple and mindless, and the vague uncomfortable feeling in Tubbo's chest released its clutches.

The eyes are the reason why he recognizes the crow right now. Their blue seems even brighter and deeper than before, the same color Tommy's used to be when they first joined the server. No long stares freak Tubbo out this time. No emotions that are supposed to be too complicated for a bird's body language. The crow blinks; indifferent and careless, it picks on its wing and yawns. By every sign, it is completely normal and Tubbo can't help but think that perhaps the weird gaze from a few weeks ago was only part of his own imagination.

Tubbo blinks.

The crow takes off.

The sky is too bright, and it's hurting Tubbo's eyes, so he keeps them shut even as he feels another pair of arms taking him from Phil. When his back is pushed to rest against something steady and warm, he doesn't fight it, too drained to register a hand rubbing circles into his back, and only by the smell and cottony fabric of a suit does he recognize Ranboo.

They sit on the ground. Tubbo has been here long enough that the snow on his clothes melted and the cold sank through his skin and bones. Ranboo bends his legs at an awkward position, clutching him to his chest.

"Are you okay?" Ranboo asks.

"I'm not," Tubbo says. And for what might be the first time in his life, he whispers, "Help me, please."

Ranboo stands up, pulling him along. A gloved hand scoops up the accursed compass from the snow, and it disappears in the suit's pocket; Tubbo hides his face away in Ranboo's shoulder.

"It's going to be alright," Ranboo murmurs.

Tubbo knows that he's being a dead weight, he knows that nobody had ever seen him this weak and hopeless before. Now that Tommy's gone – truly, fully gone – nothing's ever going to be alright anymore.

And yet... When Ranboo says it, Tubbo wants to believe him.

Time flies fast.

Weeks turn into months and months smoothly flow into a year. From a small commune at the side of the sea Snowchester turned into a town: Jack, Puffy, Connor, Fundy, Sam and a lot others resident here permanently, and even Phil visits them every once in a while.

As guilty as it made Tubbo feel, he has to admit: time heals any wound. It's not a traceless, barely visible scar; the gap in his heart is closed with shaking hands and uneven stitches. It bleeds every now and then, when he watches Michael play in the snow and thinks how the boy never got to meet Tommy, or that one time he finds two discs in a box left in front of his house.

Ranboo said it's just some bastard's sick prank. Both know that Tommy kept his greatest possessions hidden safely in his enderchest; the discs should've been gone, lost in the code, with his death. Feeling Cat's weight between his hands, Tubbo placed it into a jukebox and hums every time, with precision of milliseconds, when the needle got caught on a scratch and makes a noise.

As the music faltered, he didn't have any doubts that the discs were real. He found no explanation to that besides a theory that Tommy might've hidden them in a different place before his death. Once someone stumbled upon the discs, they decided to pass them on Tubbo – just like many other things, previously owned by his best friend, were.

He gave out most of them. Tools, armor – Tommy never put any real value in those things, anyway. His house was turned into a sort of memorial, with the flowers growing wilder and almost drowning the statue in a carpet of white and red. Among them, it's impossible to miss the netherite shimmer of the Axe of Peace.

'If he wasn't worthy of this weapon, then who is?' – the new engraving on the handle says. The enchantments keep the rust away, and it was never moved an inch from where it was driven into the ground, even if Techno gets spotted near the statue at least once a month.

The only thing that Tubbo ultimately decided to keep were the discs. Michael enjoys listening to them, as does the crow that visits him almost every other day. One time Tubbo entered the boy's room just to find him napping with Cat playing on repeat in the background, and when he tried to take the disc out of the jukebox, he got bitten by the bird hard enough to draw blood.

Generally, Nugget – that's what Phil had told them the crow's name is – is an absolute menace. He regularly gets stuck in Sam's redstone contraptions and cries for help, bursts into Puffy's office in the middle of people's therapy sessions because he *immediately* needs the pretty gold button on her jacket. Apart from trying to steal every single object in Tubbo's house that is not nailed to a wall or to the floor, he and the rest of Phil's Chat regularly mob Ranboo.

"I'm very sure that he is doing it just for fun," Phil said. His face looked like he couldn't decide on whether he should be apologetic or amused. "Don't take it as you did something wrong."

"Ah, no worries," Ranboo said. "A murder of crows, led by a child, likes to bully me as a hobby. That doesn't bother me at all."

The sarcasm dripping from his tone would be enough to poison ten people. Tubbo giggles every time one of the crows manage to jumpscare Ranboo, much to the latter's displeased rumbles.

"On the bright side, they didn't start an open war with you," Tubbo argued. "Last time I saw Jack, he was wearing a pan on his head because the crows collectively abducted his diamond helmet."

Pranks like this have become less and less frequent as of lately. The crow has been acting a bit odd; where he previously loved to chase Michael around the town, now he prefers to nap, tucked under the boy's chin, until the sun falls and Phil comes to pick him up. Tubbo doesn't get really concerned, until for one week straight, Nugget doesn't come to Snowchester at all.

Their family – and almost the entire server, to be honest – got somewhat attached to the bird. Tubbo and Ranboo ask around whether anybody had seen either Phil or his bird recently. And when it turns out that both were not spotted in the main area in a while, they take Michael, impatiently urging them towards the portal, and pay a visit to the Arctic commune.

Ranboo knocks on the door of Phil's cabin. "Hello?" he calls, raising his voice, "Is anybody home?"

Phil is the one to open the door. Techno sits in here, too, leaning back in an armchair; he doesn't look alarmed with their arrival at all, but Tubbo still tenses and gets second thoughts on whether the visit is really worth it.

Before he can react, Michael squirms out of his hands, hits the floor with his hoofs and stumps forward with a happy chirp. To his surprise, Techno only flicks an ear and leans a bit forward, showing something to the boy. Only then does Tubbo see that Nugget is gently held in-between his palms.

Tubbo knows next to nothing about birds, but even he can see that something is not right. The crow, normally so energetic that it's hard to catch him on one spot, barely opens his eyes, their distinct blue color looking like someone had turned the saturation settings down. When Nugget sees Michael, though, he caws hoarsely and makes an effort to straighten up and spread his wings. He takes a short leap from Techno's hands to Michael's head, much to the boy's delight, but as the crow carefully places his claws, his chest rises and falls too fast for it to be normal.

Ranboo and Techno make sure that Michael is careful with the bird as they play, while Phil invites Tubbo to drink some tea. They watch, through the kitchen's open door, as Michael gently feeds Nugget with crumbled pieces of nuts. The crow swallows them slowly one by one, but it looks like he's doing it more automatically rather than because he is really hungry.

"What happened?" Tubbo asks, quiet enough that only Phil can hear him. "Is he sick?"

Phil puts his cup down. He doesn't answer right away, silently propping his chin up with hands. Phil might've been around for over a thousand – or even several thousands, if you believe some of the rumors – years, but he never really seemed to age; right now, however, as he runs a hand down his own face, every crease and crinkle deepening, Tubbo sees an old, tired man.

"I don't know," he confesses. "He's not hurting anywhere in particular, just constantly sleeps or rests, and the little time he's fully awake, he is mostly too exhausted to do anything. I've never seen anything like this before. Except-"

He trails off, not finishing the sentence. Tubbo waits, and when the continuation doesn't come, echoes, "Except?"

"Older birds behave like this," Phil says. "But it doesn't make any sense. Crows live about thirteen years, more - with consistent food source and good care, and Nugget is just barely over a year old."

"Whatever it is, I hope that he gets better soon," Tubbo says.

"Yeah," Phil nods. He and Techno exchange a long sad look. "We do too."

The night falls when they finally manage to leave Phil's cabin. The five times they tried before, Michael wouldn't budge, whining and pulling at Ranboo's tail. Now he's drowsing off in Tubbo's arms, yawning and waving his hand sleepily at Nugget.

"Bye!" Michael says, and then adds another word in Piglin that neither of his parents understands. It makes Techno smile, though. He raises the crow to his eye level and says, "Tiny?"

The crow growls and pecks his nose.

Techno yelps and glares angrily as everybody else bursts laughing. Watching as tension sips away from their faces, the doubt and worry in Tubbo's chest dissipates on its own – and he's sure that everything is going to be alright.

The next morning Tubbo wakes up to the sound of Michael crying.

He throws blankets off himself, sprints across the room, and not quite in control of his body yet, almost slips off the ladder. When Tubbo finally manages to get the trapdoor open and scrambles in, Michael all but throws himself into his arms. He habitually presses a kiss to the boy's forehead and asks, "What happened?"

The heartbreaking wails falter a bit as Michael struggles to take a breath and takes out an object from under his shirt. The compass. Tubbo thought that the boy had lost it a long while already, but here it is, glass face staring back at him, bringing back unpleasant memories of his first breakdown after Tommy's death.

It stopped. The needle froze, pointing either east or west – with his still sleep-clogged mind, Tubbo is not quite sure. Michael keeps pressing the compass into his hands, and when he takes it, the boy sobs and says, in English, "Died."

A single eye fills with another portion of crystal tears. His lower lip wobbles, and it depends on Tubbo's answer whether Michael will calm down. And Tubbo... Tubbo is, openly speaking, lost. "Oh," he says. "It's not- it's not dead, Michael, it's broken."

For somewhat reason, Michael wails louder. He says something, but the words come out muffled because of how hard he shoves his face into Tubbo's arm. Tubbo has never seen Michael that upset before, the grieving cries sounding like somebody have actually died and wrenching his heart. Every time he says that *it's fine*, they are going to make another compass

for him, or even gift him a brand new gold clock, the boy only presses himself closer and shakes his head, so eventually Tubbo stops speaking at all.

He moves Michael in his arms a bit so that his cheek would be pressed against his chest. It always helps to calm him down after a particularly scary nightmare. “It’s going to be alright,” Tubbo murmurs.

Michael exhausts himself eventually, and it ends up with him sobbing quietly and Tubbo rubbing circles into his back. They hear the sound of a door opening downstairs – Ranboo must’ve returned from his morning visit to Niki’s bakery.

“Come on, let’s see what Boo had brought for us,” Tubbo stands up, scooping Michael up into his arms.

The compass – not quite broken, but having no one to point at anymore – stays discarded on the floor.

End Notes

Thanks to polytrichum for proof-reading this chapter!

Comments are the author's greatest delight, along with kudos, bookmarks and subscriptions (just saying. For no reason at all)

[My discord server in case you want to yell at me in real-time :D \(we also have an origins mod server now. come join in!\)](#)

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